

# Idu ethnobotany

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## ABSTRACT

The Idu people of Arunachal Pradesh still inhabit a rich and biodiverse environment which has been preserved from the major threats to SE Asian forests. The zoology of these forests is still little-known, though recent monographs have begun to remedy this situation in regard to mammals and herpetofauna. The birds have yet to be inventoried in any detail, although similar species to Bhutan and Nepal can be expected.

Keywords; Idu; ethnobotany; Arunachal Pradesh

### 1.3.2 Wild plants

#### 1.3.2.1 General terms

All not cultivated plants are āmbáci ‘of the wild’

All cultivated plants are òkòci ‘of the house’

algae	cèékè	
bark	āsī kòprà	
branch	hàṛō	
dense jungle with high canopy trees	īmbū	
creeper	āsīgrùù mbrā	tree + crawl + thread
ferns, brackens	called by individual name	
flower	pē	no classifier
seed	sī	bra classifier
fruit	àsīsī	
fungus	phāndī	
small grasses grazed by livestock	āpīsù	
jungle	āmbá	Also kāmbá Mithu
leaf	ná	pra classifier for flat things
moss, lichen	āpūndù	
mould	prūcù	
mushroom	ākūprà	
nut, fruit-stone	lō(kō)brā	
plant, typically tree, but any plant	āsī	
plant, small	āsībrā	
root	íprí	
seed kept for replanting	ápri	
seedling	āsībrā	
thick forest	āmbā lālū	
shrub, bush	called by individual name	
umbrella mushroom	gōlóbó	
stump, big	ētómbó	
cut portion of anything of vegetable origin lying elsewhere	cétátá	-tata suffix means left portion
cut portion of anything of vegetable origin still attached	cétátó	
tree	āsīmbó	plant + trunk
thorn	tānō	
trunk	mbó	

#### 1.3.2.2 Trees

Idu	Scientific	Type	Comments
āsīmbó		tree	
àbōmbó		tree sp.	
àcūmbó		tree sp.	<i>A. orium</i> .
àdòmbó		tree sp.	bark for ropes

Idu	Scientific	Type	Comments
āhūhūmbó	<i>Alangium</i>	tree sp.	
	<i>begoniaefolium</i>		
āmāmbó		tree sp.	formerly eaten in place of salt
āmēsūmbó		tree sp.	
āmīmbó		tree sp.	
āmīsīmbó		tree sp.	
āprēkāmbo		tree sp.	
āprēmbo		tree sp.	edible fruits
āsīpāmbo		tree sp.	
āsūkāmbo	<i>Betula</i>	tree sp.	
	<i>cylindricostchys</i>		
ātēkōmbó	<i>Pterospermum</i>	tree sp.	N. <i>hati paila</i> .
	<i>acerifolium</i>		
āthālimbo		tree sp.	
āthāsīmbó	<i>Zanthoxylum</i>	tree sp.	spice tree
	<i>armatum</i>		
āthrálimbo		tree sp.	causes itching
āwālāmbó		tree sp.	
bīmbó		tree sp.	small edible fruit borne on the ground
brègūsīmbó		tree sp.	
brīmbó		tree sp.	
chògōmbó		tree sp.	
cōpāsīmbó		tree sp.	
dāwūmbó		tree sp.	
dīmbó	<i>Pandanus</i>	tree sp.	
	<i>furcatus</i>		
dūkūtōmbó		tree sp.	
ēcōsīmbó		tree sp.	edible fruit
áhāmbó		tree sp.	large fruit
āhāmbó		tree sp.	sweet edible seeds. Birds eat fruits
ēkāmbo		tree sp.	
ēkōmbó	<i>Albizzia procera</i>	tree sp.	
ēkópōmbó		tree sp.	timber
ēkrēmbo		tree sp.	tall, barkless
èlàkrōmbó	<i>Duabanga</i>	tree sp.	A. <i>khokan</i> .
	<i>sonnerioides</i>		
èlàmbó	<i>Terminalia</i>	tree sp.	A. hollock tree
	<i>myriocarpa</i>		
èlōmbó		tree sp.	
ēlōsīmbó		tree sp.	
éndrónómbó	<i>Daphniphyllum</i>	tree sp.	sweet edible fruits
	<i>himalayense</i>		
ējōmbó		tree sp.	jackfruit
énósīmbó		tree sp.	fruits
éngámbo		tree sp.	
èráyīmbó		tree sp.	
ēpōshīmbó	<i>Ficus roxburghii</i>	tree sp.	<i>Anthrocephalus indicus</i>
ērōmbó	<i>Morus laevigata</i>	tree sp.	H. <i>bola</i> .
èrýāmbó		tree sp.	banyan
ēsósīmbó		tree sp.	
ētōkōmbó		tree sp.	timber
ètōmbó		tree sp.	
īdīmbó	<i>Phoebe</i>	tree sp.	A. <i>mekahi</i> . Edible fruits, timber

Idu	Scientific	Type	Comments
idūmbó	<i>cooperiana</i> <i>Bombax</i>	tree sp.	<i>A. simul.</i>
īgūmbó	<i>malabaricum</i> <i>Erythrina</i>	tree sp.	thorny tree with a red flower
īkhrūsímbó	<i>arborescens</i> <i>Gynocardia</i>	tree sp.	fruit eaten by animals
ikúcímbó	<i>odorata</i>	tree sp.	
ikúshì		tree sp.	small fruit
inùmbó		tree sp.	
irùmbó	<i>Altingia excelsa</i>	tree sp.	<i>A. jutli</i> . Don't use to build houses
jēēmbó	<i>Mesua ferrua</i>	tree sp.	<i>A. nahar</i> নাহৰ. Indian rose chestnut
jèkàrèmbó		tree sp.	bark used as fish-poison.
kámúsímbó		tree sp.	apricot
kānāsímbó	<i>Saurauia</i> <i>napaulensis</i>	tree sp.	grows at high altitude
khìndímbó		tree sp.	
lòhòmbó	<i>Rhus semialata</i>	tree sp.	Seed can be eaten but very sour in taste
màcùmbó		tree sp.	<i>A. lali</i> . Costly timber
māndzāmbó		tree sp.	
mànùmbó	<i>Ficus elastica</i>	tree sp.	wild rubber
màthùmbó	<i>Toona ciliata</i>	tree sp.	
màwùmbó		tree sp.	
ōmtírāmbó	<i>Citrus sinensis</i>	tree sp.	orange
nānjómbó	<i>Litsea citrata</i>	tree sp.	
pàsīpūmbó	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	tree sp.	bael
picíkòmbó		tree sp.	<i>A. dalsini</i> . Edible bark Mithu dialect
pòmòmbó		tree sp.	edible fruit
rēēmbó	<i>Terminalia</i> <i>chebula</i>	tree sp.	myrobalan. <i>A. hilika</i> . Edible fruits. Remedy for stomach ailments
rèkámbo		tree sp.	<i>A. duna</i> . provides a fragrance for the house
sòbósímbó	<i>Schleichera</i> <i>oleosa</i>	tree sp.	large edible fruits
sòpúmbó	<i>Michelia</i> <i>machaca</i>	tree sp.	<i>A. titasopa</i> . Costly timber
sòsólímbó		tree sp.	with prominent flowers, used for live fences
súbrásímbó	<i>Spondus</i> <i>auxiliaris</i>	tree sp.	tree with large edible fruits
tālímbo		tree sp.	two types with pink and white flowers
tāpāmbó		tree sp.	high forest
tásímbó		tree sp.	
táyūmbó		tree sp.	<i>A. dalsini</i> . Edible bark
thrōmbó	<i>Pinus longifolia</i>	tree sp.	pine, generic term

Table 1. Idu shrubs

Type	Idu	Scientific	Comments
shrub	āpāmbó		
shrub	ābrāmbó		formerly the bark was used for making cloth
sp. I			
shrub	ēgrōmbó		
shrub	èkhāmbó		
shrub	ēṅgōmbó	<i>Leucosceptrum canum</i>	

**Table 1. Idu shrubs**

Type	Idu	Scientific	Comments
shrub.	ētóthròmbō	<i>Datura stramonium</i>	
shrub	màgàmbó		
shrub	nààmbó		
shrub	nāmīmbó		
shrub	nànjámbó		
shrub	àyúmùmbō		

Idu	Scientific	English	Comments
àlímbo	<i>Caryota urens</i>	palm sp.	wood used for loom frame
àlōmbó		sago palm sp	Until recently, the interior was extracted to feed pigs. Mithu dial. màlōmbó
ìlímbo	<i>Caryota mitis</i>	fishtail palm	
ìpūmbó		palm sp.	
ìúmbó		fishtail palm	ìúná This species grows in groves used in funerary ceremonies, e.g.yā
sārāmbó	<i>Livistona jenkinsiana</i>	toko-patta palm	Used to make roofs

**Table 2. Idu wild and cultivated bananas**

Idu	Comment
ājīmbo	cultivated banana
àlōmbó	wild banana sp. leaf contains a powder women put on their hands in order to weave smoothly. Outer skin is used to make roofing edges.
ànjárimbō	wild banana sp. same as <i>làhimbó</i>
àtāmbó	wild banana sp.
āwūmbó	wild banana, flower eaten
ēlōmbó	wild banana sp.
làhimbó	wild banana sp. same as <i>ànjárimbō</i>

### 1.3.2.3 Bamboos and canes

bamboo I	āṇētō, māṇētō	used for construction in the plains areas do classifier, planted type
bamboo I	bùlúkā	planted, type of <i>māṇētō</i>
bamboo I	ārútó	large sp.
bamboo II	ābrátó	<i>Phyllostachys bambusoides</i> . Apatani bamboo. Planted and used for construction in the montane areas.
bamboo III	hīcító	wild, light
bamboo IV	brádūtò	hill areas, thorny
bamboo V	ìlitō	small-bore used for hats
bamboo VI	kālītō	yellow
bamboo VII	àpàtō	large, wild, used for making cups, carrying water
bamboo VIII	mānútó	high-altitude
bamboo VIII	àpító	small-bore
bamboo IX	bàndātō	used for construction, mats
cane I	lákātō	used to make rope and basketry, but regarded as weak so used for

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cane II	àrùtò	temporary things
cane III	èlāshòtò	used to make furniture, rope and basketry, strong
cane IV	lākāmbòtò	used to make backpacks
cane V	ēṛātō	leaves used as thatch for house and in furniture. <i>Salacca salacca</i>
cane VI	lākāsù	used to make a special hat (àpòtòlò jùhī, gèràndū)
		a variety of lākātō, very thin, occasionally planted by other tribes

## 1.3.2.4 Grasses and herbs

grass, gen	āpī sù	
grass, gen	āpī līsi	
grass, gen	āpī àmbà	
grass, gen	āpī sádú	
grass sp.	ābōlā	
grass sp.	īrūlā	
grass sp.	āpū	
grass sp.	ēmbrotō	useless
grass sp.	ībūtō	<i>Phragmites karka</i> . A. nal. useless. probably <i>Arundo donax</i>
grass sp.	àkō	used for thatch in plains. <i>Imperata cylindrica</i>
grass sp.	ishū(tō)	used for brooms
grass sp.	bī	used for thatch in mountain areas
grass sp.,	ēpō(tō)	tall, used in rituals for the birth of a new baby
herb sp. I	ābrāná	leaves are eaten
herb sp. I	ācīmūthrū	blackjack. <i>Bidens pilosa</i> .
herb sp. I	ādrīpā	
herb sp. I	àgōsì	leaves boiled and used in massage
herb sp. I	àhōkóná	rat ear. <i>Centella asiatica</i> , <i>Hydrocotyle asiatica</i>
herb sp. I	āhōlā	<i>Molineria capitulata</i> .
herb sp. I	àhōná	wild vegetable
herb sp. I	āhū brēnā	
herb sp. I	ājīnā	
herb sp. I	ákānā	wild vegetable. <i>Solanum nigrum</i> .
herb sp. I	ākēdēsònā	
herb sp. I	ākrāmbó	shrub
herb sp. I	ālāná	
herb sp. I	ālītō	black cardamom <i>Amomum subulatum</i> .
herb sp. I	àlú támà	medicine of maggot infestation
herb sp. I	àmānā	
herb sp. I	àmē àthrālī	itches. monkey + athrali
herb sp. I	àmēnā	
herb sp. I	àmūlī	
herb sp. I	ànātró	wild bean
herb sp. I	ànāzáná	wild vegetable
herb sp. I	àndīngá	? horsetail with tuber
herb sp. I	āpéná	
herb sp. I	àpòtrē, àpitrū	
herb sp. I	àrányù	wild aroid fed to pigs
herb sp. I	àṛīnā	<i>Impatiens racemosa</i>
herb sp. I	àṛōṛā	
herb sp. I	āṛúkólò	
herb sp. I	áthrópā	
herb sp. I	ātrūmbó	extensively used in ritual performances. The <i>igu</i> pluck the fruit, chew it

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and spew it out

herb sp. I	àú brēnā	
herb sp. I	àwúsi	wild black pepper
herb sp. I	àyē sàpānā	formerly used for smoking. <i>Plantago major</i> . broadleaf plantain, white man's foot
herb sp. I	àyí n̄jīnā	
herb sp. I	bāmā sètèkà	Fruits boiled for food.
herb sp. I	bò krēmbo	<i>Typhonium venosum</i> . Used to feed pigs. cf.
herb sp. I	ēmátó	
herb sp. I	ēmbātō	
herb sp. I	ènō	H. til. black sesame. edible black seeds
herb sp. I	ènōpū	<i>Ageratum houstonianum</i> . flossweed
herb sp. I	ènōsi	<i>Chromolaena odorata</i> .
Mishmi tita	ètō	<i>Coptis tita</i> .
herb sp. I	ìcīnō	
herb sp. I	ìkūkhà(nā)	dog faeces
herb sp. I	ìkūlú	<i>Lobelia nummularia</i> .
herb sp. I	ìkūpāmbō	et. knee of dog. shrub
herb sp. I	īlīmù	
herb sp. I	īṛū	
herb sp. I	īthūmūmbō	shrub
herb sp. I	jārīmūná	< German. <i>Crassocephalum crepidioides</i> seen after appearance of German warplanes in the sky
herb sp. I	lālīsì	
herb sp. I	làndū	wild edible shoots
herb sp. I	lòbrè	
herb sp. I	lūbrūná	
herb sp. I	māīmbō	shrub
herb sp. I	mànjo āthrālì	common nettle. deer + athrali. <i>Urtica dioica</i>
herb sp. I	mrāā	Aconite. <i>Aconitum napellus</i> .
herb sp. I	nāndōmbō	shrub
herb sp. I	pókèmbō	<i>Typhonium venosum</i> . Used to feed pigs. cf.
herb sp. I	prākūná	
herb sp. I	pūsūnā	
herb sp. I	sē māmbo	shrub
herb sp. I	sētēkānō	<i>Solanum incanum</i>
herb sp. I	sónsi	wild aroid
tree sp.	tōngōmbō	shrub
herb sp. I	tūpūrūná	wild vegetable. Very bitter, reduces blood pressure. <i>Clerodendrum colebrookianum</i> (Lephaphu-Assamese)

### 1.3.2.4 Ferns

Fern sp. I	àhúpì	has burning pollen
Fern sp. I	àndīcū	edible. <i>Diplazium spp.</i>
Fern sp. I	àdákho	grows in montane areas
Fern sp. I	èpāmbō	edible giant fern
Fern sp. I	ànúyāmbō	giant fern. <i>Angiopteris evecta</i> .
Fern sp. I	sētō	the stems can be dried and become very sharp. They are placed upright in the ground to prevent thieves entering the farm. They pierce the sole of the foot
Cycad sp. I	cūūmbō	



### 1.3.2.4 Epiphytes

Epiphyte I	prá ídríkā	bird charcoal
Epiphyte I	àdàkà ēlā.ā	quiver of the squirrel
Epiphyte I	ànjí grīyīpá	

### 1.3.2.5 Creepers

creeper I	itù	
creeper I	āchānū àndèē	soybean of the marble cat
creeper I	āchāyīpā	
creeper I	āṅgōcī tāmā	medicine for shivering
creeper I	āṅgōsā tāmā	
creeper I	ápíkúshīpā	
creeper I	àróbēnā	
creeper I	ārūnyīpā	
creeper I	āsā lākāpū	fruit
creeper I	āsā tāmā	medicine of Asa spirit
creeper I	áthrō kāpā	
creeper I	átí āprā	
creeper I	àtrákùnā	
creeper I	àwō pēṅā	Molucca bramble. <i>Rubus moluccanus</i> . জেতুলি পকা (Assamese)
creeper I	àwō trèpā	
creeper I	déyāpā	fruit like a pumpkin, high on trees, normally not eaten
creeper I	èlōkānā	wild aerial yam, can be eaten
creeper I	èyáwènā	<i>Mikania micrantha</i> . Weed said to have been brought by Americans. Leaf juice is applied to cuts and wounds as haemostatic.
creeper I	íkúlū rùpā	
creeper I	ilí kīsū rùmbṛā	
creeper I	íphīṭū	the fruit-shell was eaten in times of famine
creeper	ishī	used as rope to tie small bamboos together
creeper I	krē ésāpā	et. rice + veins
creeper I	tákálá	
creeper I	táṭó	

### 1.3.2.5 Mushrooms

mushroom I	ākūprā	edible.
mushroom II	ākūthū	poison. <i>Crepidotus</i> sp.
mushroom III	ākūdrū	Jelly ear fungus. soft, black, edible, looks like an ear. <i>Auricularia orrilla judae</i> .
mushroom IV	gōlómbó	very large, edible. <i>Termitomyces letestui</i> .
mushroom V	ākūpī	very small, edible
mushroom VI	ākūnyū	white, soft, edible
mushroom VI	ākūpū	<i>Agaricus bisporus</i> . Portobello mushroom